

IS *ESPERANZA TEXANA* BARBER (HEMIPTERA: ALYDIDAE) EXTENDING ITS RANGE?¹

Richard C. Froeschner²

ABSTRACT: *Esperanza texana* Barber, previously reported from Texas, Louisiana and Florida, is here reported also from Mississippi, Georgia and South Carolina. A recent expansion of range is suggested. The species is characterized among North American Alydidae.

Esperanza texana was originally described from Texas by Barber (1906, Bull. Brooklyn Inst. Arts and Sci., 1:269). Subsequently a 1926 collection in Louisiana was reported by Johnston (1927, Bull. Brooklyn Ent. Soc., 22:221) and a 1948 capture in Florida by Hussey (1948, Bull. Brooklyn Ent. Soc., 43:115). On the basis of specimens in the national collection in the U.S. National Museum of Natural History this insect can be reported here from Georgia (Albany, 1954; Bainbridge, 1941; Tifton, 1963); Mississippi (Lincoln Co., 1938); and South Carolina (Estill, 1965). The advance in dates as one considers the localities from Texas eastward to Florida and northward to South Carolina suggests an expansion of range has been taking place during the last several decades.

Observations on the habits and biology of this species are needed.

Among the North American alydids, *E. texana* is readily recognized by the following characters taken together: The pronotal humeri and posterior femora are without spines, and the apex of the scutellum is prolonged into a short, very acute, noticeably upturned spine. Torre-Bueno (1941: Ent. Amer., 21:78), in his key to the genera of Alydidae in America north of Mexico, erroneously stated "Scutellum not spined at apex."

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²Department of Entomology, NHB Stop 127, Washington, D.C. 20560